

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF CONSULAR AGENTS
HANDBOOK

REF: STATE 151155

1. DEPARTMENT'S CABLE MOST WELCOME, AND POST LOOKS FORWARD TO RECEIPT OF CONSULAR AGENTS HANDBOOK WHICH WE BELIEVE IS NOT ONLY MUCH NEEDED GUIDANCE BUT ESTABLISHED RECOGNITION THAT ROLE OF AGENT IS IMPORTANT ADJUNCT TO OUR CONSULAR SERVICES, PARTICULARLY WELFARE AND PROTECTION. AT THIS TIME, POST WISHES TO ADDRESS ITSELF TO TWO ASPECTS WHICH WE BELIEVE MERIT DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION NOW.

2. FIRST IS COMPENSATION, WHICH WE STRONGLY URGE BE REVISED. INDEED, AT ALL THREE REGIONAL CONSULAR AGENTS ATTENDED BY THIS POST OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, THE QUESTION WAS RAISED AND THE DEPARTMENT'S REPLY WAS THAT REVISION OF COMPENSATION WAS UNDER STUDY.

A. OUR CONSULAR AGENT IN THE COSTA DEL SOL OPERATES IN A COMMUNITY OF AMERICANS WELL AWARE THAT U.S. GOVERNMENT ONCE HAD FULLY STAFFED CONSULATE IN PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF MALAGA AT TIME
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WHEN HERE WERE MANY FEWER RESIDENT AND TRANSIENT AMERICANS. THE POSSIBILITY OF REESTABLISHING SUCH A POST IS RAISED FROM TIME TO TIME, INDEED MOST RECENTLY WHEN PRINCIPAL OFFICER SPOKE TO MALAGA CHAPTER OF AMERICAN CLUB THIS PAST JUNE 13. SINCE LATE SIXTIES, GROWING COMMUNITY OF SEVERAL THOUSAND RETIRED AMERICANS HAS DEVELOPED WITH CONCOMITANT ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE AMERICAN CLUB OF OVER 800 MEMBERS. AS NOTED IN PREVIOUS CABLES, AMERICAN

ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS, NATIONAL TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, AND NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SENIOR CITIZENS SEND MANY THOUSANDS OF ELDERLY AMERICANS TO THAT AREA BETWEEN SEPTEMBER AND JUNE EVERY YEAR. MOREOVER WE HAVE HAD CONSISTENT POPULATION OF ARRESTEES EMANATING IN MARBELLA, FUENGIROLA AND MALAGA SO THAT OUR AGENT THERE HAS BEEN RATHER BUSY PERSON WHOSE ACTIVITIES ARE FAR IN EXCESS OF THE OFFICE HOURS HE KEEPS WEEKLY. WE KNOW OF MANY INSTANCES WHERE VISITS TO PRISONS -- OFTEN INITIAL ACCESS -- VISITS TO HOSPITALIZED TOURISTS, ATTENDANCE TO NEEDS OF STRANDED CHARTER GROUPS ON WEEKENDS AND MANY OTHER DEMANDS HAVE RESULTED IN THIRTY TO FORTY HOUR WEEK.

B. CALCULATED IN TERMS OF ANNUAL SALARY OF CLASS I AGENT, WE SOMETIMES BARELY PAY THE U.S. MINIMUM WAGE. TO SAY THAT SUCH AGENTS SHOULD NOT BE IN IT FOR THE MONEY IS REMINISCENT OF THE OLD AND WE HOPE DISCARDED RATIONALIZATION ONCE OFFERED TO KEEP SCHOOL TEACHERS' SALARIES LOW. IN TERMS OF COST EFFECTIVENESS AND GETTING OUR MONEY'S WORTH, AND CONSIDERING THE ALTERNATIVES, WE BELIEVE A CONSULAR AGENCY PROPERLY BACKSTOPPED BY THE SCP IS AN EXTREMELY EFFICIENT WAY TO PROVIDE CONSULAR SERVICES AND WELL WORTH THE INVESTMENT. WE BELIEVE THE AGENTS SHOULD BE DECENTLY COMPENSATED FOR THEIR SERVICES AND THEREFORE URGE THE DEPARTMENT TO MAKE A DECISION SOON WITH REGARD TO UPWARD REVISION.

3. REGARDING PERFORMANCE EVALUATION, WE STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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THIS ASPECT BE KEPT AS SIMPLE AND INFORMAL AS POSSIBLE. WE VISIT OUR CONSULAR AGENT AT LEAST ONCE PER MONTH AND MAKE ON-THE-SPOT

INSPECTION ACCORDING TO THE CHECKLIST (AND A FEW ADDITIONS OF OUR OWN) PROVIDED 3 FAM 996.2. THUS UNLESS DEPARTMENT PERCEIVES SOME OBJECTION, WE DO NOT PROPOSE TO FIT WRITTEN EVALUATIONS IN THIS REGARD SINCE IT IS NOT SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED AND DOES NOT APPEAR APPROPRIATE TO THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE NURTURED WITH OUR AGENCY.FOUCHE

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